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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.

New Releases-

Release No. 1041.93

Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623

ESPY ANNOUNCES CHINA TO ACCEPT U.S. APPLES FOR THE FIRST TIME

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18 -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy tonight announced the signing of an historic agreement allowing apples from Washington State into China.

"For the first time, China is allowing American apples in commercial quantities into that country," said Espy, who discussed with Chinese officials the acceptance of U.S. apples during a trade mission there in October. This is a significant agreement.

"We see this to be the first in a series of steps that would open China up to imports of a wide variety of U.S. fruits and vegetables -- from all parts of our country. In fact, the outlook for greater exports of apples to China is exceedingly bright because of tremendous markets for U.S. apples that currently exist in other Asian countries -- specifically, Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

"President Clinton and I are determined to continue to increase farm income through increasing farm trade."

Espy added that apples are already exceedingly popular in China.

Officials of the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service reached agreement with Chinese plant quarantine officials last week in China.

The agreement establishes the conditions for the entry of Washington apples into China. The first sale is expected in March.

The apples must come from designated orchards and be packaged in designated packaging facilities. The facilities must have a certificate of compliance with APHIS-approved procedures for export production.

After processing, the apples must be placed in a cold-temperature facility prior to shipment.

"The USDA will ensure that the apple exports conform with China's phytosanitary specifications," Espy said.



Release No. 1042.93

Val Chambers (202) 720-2065

Diana Morse (202) 720-4772

SCS EMPLOYEE INDUCTED INTO GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER HALL OF FAME

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20 -- A U.S. Department of Agriculture executive has been inducted into the George Washington Carver Public Service Hall of Fame for his career-long work in advancing the quality of life for rural people and his continual support of the 1890 land-grant historically black colleges and universities.

James E. Tatum, associate deputy chief for strategic planning and budget analysis for the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), received the award at the 51st Professional Agricultural Workers Conference at Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, Ala., on December 7. He is the first person to receive the award from outside the academic community.

He was recognized for work that began when he started his career 28 years ago with the Soil Conservation Service. As a young soil conservationist in Albuquerque, N.M., Tatum recruited, hired, and counseled many young Native Americans, Hispanics, and African Americans.

In 1988, he helped bring together leaders from USDA agencies and the 1890 land-grant community in a symposium in Nashville, Tenn., that has resulted in strengthening the linkages between the 1890 institutions and USDA.

"As a result of Jim's tireless efforts and follow-up, the Nashville recommendations have been implemented, benefiting all of us," said Paul Johnson, chief of SCS. "Just as important, the process has become a model in USDA for working with other institutions," Johnson said.

Tatum, who lives in Mitchellville, Md., received his B.S. degree from an 1890 institution, Arkansas Mechanical and Normal College (now the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff), and received his M.A. from Syracuse University. He is a native of Dermott, Ark.

During his SCS career, Tatum has served as district conservationist and area conservationist in New Mexico; management analyst and National Conservation Program liaison; and agency technology transfer manager in Washington, D.C.

He has served on key USDA task forces examining such issues as program compliance for civil rights, board and committee participation by women and minorities, and USDA/1890 initiatives.

He is currently vice-chair of the newly organized USDA/1890 Executive Team to provide staff work for the USDA/1890 Task Force. He is also a member of the Soil and Water Conservation Society of America, the Association of Agriculture Research Directors, the National Organization of Professional Black Soil Conservation Service Employees, and the Forum on Blacks in Agriculture.



Release No. 1043.93
Linda Cooke (309) 681-6530
Judith Bowers (202) 720-2032

WEED'S OWN BACTERIA MAY CONTRIBUTE TO ITS DECLINE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21--A weed that infests 5 million acres of pasture and rangeland in the Northern Great Plains and Southwest may soon meet an unusual enemy--bacteria already living around the weed's roots, says a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist.

Leafy spurge infests pasture and rangeland in Arizona, Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming, crowding out agricultural crops and grasses. The weed causes annual crop losses of up to \$30 million, in addition to as much as \$5 million spent for chemical controls. Cattle generally avoid leafy spurge.

Agricultural Research Service microbiologist Robert J. Kremer of Columbia, Mo., has identified several bacteria naturally present around the weed's roots that suppressed emergence of 50 percent of leafy spurge seedlings in greenhouse studies.

Kremer also found that applying the bacteria--*Pseudomonas fluorescens* and *Flavobacterium*--reduced growth of seedlings that emerged and cut the length of their taproots by 50 percent.

Reducing taproot length is important because roots of leafy spurge typically reach 4 feet into the soil. The taproots also have buds from which new shoots develop, making it difficult to eliminate the weed with herbicides.

"We're studying the effectiveness of simply boosting the numbers of these bacteria," Kremer explained. "The bacteria produce large amounts of plant growth hormones. As we increase the bacteria levels, the overabundance of hormones could suppress the weed's growth rather than stimulate it." The bacteria will not harm crops, he added.

In the spring of 1994, the researchers plan to evaluate the effect of the bacteria on weed seedlings in the field.

Developing new biological control methods is important because of the increasing number of banned and restricted-use herbicides, leaving farmers with fewer weapons to fight this noxious weed.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Contact for details Robert J. Kremer, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Columbia, Mo. 65211. Telephone: (314) 882-6408.



Release No. 1044.93
Alicia L. Ford (202) 720-8998

ESPY NAMES NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD MEMBERS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21 -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy has announced the appointment of 10 members to the National Watermelon Promotion Board.

The National Watermelon Promotion Board was established by the 1985 Watermelon Research and Promotion Plan, authorized by the Watermelon Research and Promotion Act. The board is composed of two handlers and two producers for each of the seven districts in the contiguous United States and one public member.

Producers nominate producer members, handlers nominate handler members and the board nominates the member representing the public. The Secretary of Agriculture appoints members from these groups of nominees.

The board administers a national program of research and promotion for watermelons. Watermelon producers and handlers finance the board's programs through assessments on domestic watermelons. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors the board's operations.

The following appointees will serve terms beginning Jan. 1, 1994, and ending Dec. 31, 1996.

Producers reappointed are: District 1 -- Thomas A. Smith, LaBelle, Fla., and Douglas L. Johnson, Immokalee, Fla.

Handlers reappointed are: District 1 -- Willis J. Peacock III, Arcadia, Fla., and William R. Ward Jr., Lakeland, Fla.; District 6 -- Ralph Scott, Edinburg, Texas, and Todd E. Anderson, Dilley, Texas.

Newly appointed producers are: District 6 -- Gus T. Canales, Premont, Texas, and Edwin Garrett, Weslaco, Texas.

Reappointed to represent the public is Barbara J. Brown, Stillwater, Okla.

In addition, Espy appointed Greg Underwood, Indio, Calif., as a handler member to fill a vacant position in District 7. Underwood will serve a term beginning immediately and ending Dec. 31, 1995.



Release No. 1046.93
Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623
Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623

ESPY REVIEWS STEPS TAKEN TO IMPROVE MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTION SYSTEMS OVER PAST YEAR

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21 -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy's emphasis on improving the nation's meat and poultry inspection systems has put into place more changes in 12 months than had been made in the past 12 years.

The changes have occurred system-wide at USDA and have included several agencies including the Food Safety and Inspection Service, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Agricultural Research Service and the Food and Nutrition Service.

U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said, "I am very pleased with the meat and poultry inspection initiatives of Secretary Espy. The secretary believes that Americans want to be confident in the wholesomeness of the food they feed their families.

"The secretary did more to improve food safety in his first few months in office than the department did in the previous 12 years."

Since coming to office in January, Espy has met with whistle-blowers, consumer groups, industry and the families of those affected by E.coli outbreaks in an effort to develop a multi-pronged approach to food safety.

"We have launched a proactive agenda that will guide a system left behind in the early 1900's -- into the Year 2000 and beyond," said Espy. "We are initiating and accelerating change to improve the safety of the meat and poultry supply from the farm to the table. Theories that have sat in file folders are now being tested in our laboratories.

"Over the past year, we have made many changes and brought a new attitude of strict enforcement to the system, but I am far from satisfied. We must continue to improve the safety of the meat and poultry supply, especially in the area of developing new science."

Some of the major efforts to improve the system under Espy have included moving toward mandatory safe handling labels for all raw and not-ready-to-eat meat and poultry, establishing a special review team to conduct unannounced inspections and accelerating a two-track pathogen reduction program.

From the beginning, Espy moved into high-gear a strategic pathogen reduction program that aims to reduce microbial contamination from the farm to the table and to develop new inspection methods based on sound science. The two-track system includes moving toward a science-based inspection system while during the interim improving the current system.

Espy has called for mandatory safe cooking and handling labels on meat and poultry from the beginning of the new administration. While the effort was temporarily delayed due to an industry lawsuit, the department is currently moving toward implementation of the labels early next year. Espy has emphasized, however, that the label does not relieve the department from continuing to improve the safety of meat and poultry.

Soon after the E.coli outbreak in January, Espy also directed the Food Safety and Inspection Service to begin to conduct special, unannounced reviews of plants throughout the country. Out of the 90 plants initially reviewed, 30 plants were temporarily closed. Twelve plants were placed under PEA or Progressive Enforcement Action.

The unannounced reviews were conducted by a special team based in Lawrence, Kansas. Espy changed the procedures so that the reviews are now unannounced and result in regular reports to the secretary.

The following are some additional changes Espy has implemented to improve the country's meat and poultry inspection system:

- *A liaison from FSIS has been sent to work at the Centers For Disease Control to help trace and investigate E. Coli 0157:H7 outbreaks.

- *FSIS has expanded its nationwide microbial baseline studies. The studies will identify and establish a baseline for pathogens. The baseline will give us a picture of what pathogens are present and in what numbers.

- *Espy directed FSIS to conduct an all-out search for a rapid-test for E.coli. An announcement calling for proposals was published in the Federal Register on Oct. 21.

- *Between March and September, approximately 400 inspectors were hired, increasing the past number of inspectors by 200 and keeping hires up-to-date as inspectors left the system. As inspectors are hired, they are being better trained to understand the concerns about pathogens.

- *Veterinary coverage of higher risk slaughter plants has been enhanced to ensure that public health expertise is proportional to risk.

- *Mandatory trimming of all fecal ingesta and milk contamination in beef slaughter operations has been reinforced.

- *FSIS is funding a study to determine whether washing or trimming is more effective in removing contamination.

- *New rules are being written to strengthen requirements that meat and poultry plants maintain records that will help identify and trace back product.

- *A new Public Health Division within FSIS is being established and will be headed by a physician.

- *On Sept. 2, FSIS and FDA held a teleconference in 49 states (Hawaii was the exception) for state health officials to discuss steps to take to prevent foodborne illnesses.

- *The department is implementing several safe food handling public awareness campaigns including targeting efforts to educate young mothers and food handlers in restaurants and in hospitals, nursing homes, day care centers, and homeless shelters. Radio public service announcements on the safe handling and cooking labels are being produced and distributed nationwide.

- *The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is working together with the FDA to develop better investigation protocols for on-farm use.

- *Research is being conducted to develop an E. coli vaccine to be used on the farm.

- *The use of organic acid is being encouraged to reduce pathogens on surfaces of beef carcasses.

*Espy has directed FSIS managers at all levels to help spread the word about meat and poultry safety at USDA. He wants USDA to have a new attitude about providing better service in all agencies - and he is constantly pushing to have this new attitude expressed, not just in Washington, but on the line in slaughter operations and every other stage of processing and dressing.

*Espy has regulated the procedures for cooking and handling cooked meat patties. The announcement was made Aug. 2. The new rule was effective Sept. 2.

*FSIS was directed to create a profile of plants, like the controversial Cornhusker plant in Nebraska, that are likely to have problems. Once the profile is created -- Espy has directed that plants that fit that profile be identified and special reviews conducted. This is just one of the changes that FSIS was directed to implement following an Office of Inspector General's report requested by the secretary on the Cornhusker plant.

The Cornhusker plant was featured in a broadcast on CBS earlier this year. The broadcast noted several sanitation problems at the plant. It did not, however, identify the plant by name or location. Subsequently, the secretary had the plant identified and called for the OIG report.

Another recommendation from the report being implemented is the designation of a point person in Washington to receive inspectors' reports from the field and do follow-up on the reports if problems have been identified and not addressed.

*Espy has issued his intention to mandate Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems in all meat and poultry plants. A roundtable, which will include consumer groups and whistle-blowers, will be held early next year on implementing HACCP.



Release No. 1047.93

Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623

Ron Hall (202) 720-3310

ESPY RELEASES RADIO PSA STRESSING SAFE FOOD HANDLING AND COOKING

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21 -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy has released a radio public service announcement on safe handling and cooking instructions for raw meat and poultry.

The radio PSA, which was mailed this week to 1,000 radio stations around the country, includes a quote from a Washington State couple whose son died due to the E.coli pathogen in January.

Bellingham, Wash. residents Darin and Vicki Detwiler are featured in the PSA. Vicki Detwiler is quoted as saying, "We went through the most tortuous experience any parents could," while her husband Darin advises that "There is a great lack of knowledge nationally about issues of food safety and E.coli."

Espy said the purpose of the PSA is to remind consumers that proper handling and thorough cooking of meat and poultry can reduce the risk of food poisoning.

A safe handling and cooking label, which is in the process of being mandated, also reminds consumers to keep meat and poultry frozen or refrigerated and to thaw meats in the refrigerator or microwave. The label advises to keep raw meats away from other foods, and the consumer should wash all working surfaces -- and hands -- after touching raw meat and poultry.

Three formats of the PSA were distributed: a 60-second, 30-second, and 15-second.

The PSA is part of a series of efforts launched by Espy to improve the meat and poultry inspection system. For instance, he has hired more than 200 new inspectors, created a special review team to conduct unannounced inspections, and accelerated the move to a more science-based inspection system.

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(See attachment for complete script of 60-second spot)

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

SAFE HANDLING LABELS FOR MEAT AND POULTRY

:60

ANNOUNCER:

Darin and Vicki Detwiler lost their child to a deadly strain of E.coli bacteria, which can be found in undercooked meat.

Vicki Detwiler (from 8/11/93 news conference at USDA):

We went through the most tortuous experience any parents could.

Darin Detwiler (from 8/11/93 news conference at USDA):

There is a great lack of knowledge nationally about issues of food safety and E.coli.

ANNOUNCER:

Proper handling and thorough cooking of meat and poultry can reduce your risk of food poisoning.

That's why the U.S. Department of Agriculture is in the process of requiring safe handling labels on all raw and partial cooked meat and poultry products.

Some producers and retailers are voluntarily including these important instructions with their products.

They remind you to keep meat and poultry frozen or refrigerated, and to thaw meats in the refrigerator or microwave.

To keep raw meats away from other foods, and wash all working surfaces and hands after touching raw meat and poultry.

And to cook meats thoroughly, and refrigerate leftovers within two hours.

Follow these safe handling instructions for raw meat and poultry, and keep your food and your family safe.

A public service of the United States Department of Agriculture.



Release No. 1049.93

Steve Lombardi (202) 720-9113

Jacque Knight (202) 720-9113

WILSON RECALLS JUMBO FRANKS FROM CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today that Wilson Foods Corporation, an Oklahoma City, Okla., food processing firm, is voluntarily recalling about 40,000 pounds of its Wilson Jumbo Franks because some of the product was improperly processed and has the potential of causing serious illness if eaten.

The product was distributed to retail food stores and military commissaries throughout the continental United States, except Alaska, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

All 1-pound packages of Wilson's "Our Jumbos Franks" (made with chicken and pork) with the following codes printed on the edge of the label are being recalled:

- F6 ESTP-4225 SELL BY FEB 05
- G6 ESTP-4225 SELL BY FEB 05
- F6W ESTP-4225 SELL BY FEB 05
- G6W ESTP-4225 SELL BY FEB 05

No other Wilson food product is affected by the recall.

"Because of the potential hazard, we strongly urge customers to avoid opening or tasting the product," said Dr. Donald L. White, associate administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. "Although no illnesses have been reported, we urge consumers who may have purchased the suspect product to return it to the place of purchase."

The company reported the problem to USDA after it discovered that some of the product already shipped to stores may have been undercooked.

Common symptoms of foodborne illness include flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, headache, backache, and, in some cases, abdominal pain and diarrhea.

Consumers with questions about the recall may phone the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. The Hotline can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. This number also provides access to a telecommunications device for the deaf and the hearing impaired.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: For your information, to help identify the product, Wilson Foods has provided the following toll-free number for media and consumer inquiries: 1-800-278-7041.

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Release No. 1050.93

Leslie Parker (202) 720-2798

Linda Oliphant (202) 720-6662

SECRETARY ESPY ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FOR BLACK LANDGRANT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22 -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced continuation of a four year, \$2.8 million National Scholars Program designed to provide scholarships and employment opportunities to students at historically Black land grant colleges and universities.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is the first executive branch department in American history to establish a program of this magnitude for undergraduate study at the nation's 17 historically Black land grant colleges and universities. The scholarship program, aimed at students studying agriculture or related subjects, places successful graduates into career positions at USDA.

"This program is an important tool in advancing educational opportunity and opening up USDA employment opportunities to all of the nation's best and brightest young people. Increasing the diversity of our workforce is a critical element of my effort to reinvent the Department of Agriculture. Black land-grant colleges and institutions will be important partners in this change we are making nationwide, and we are continuing to look at ways to expand our partnership," Espy said.

Last year the program provided 46 young people the opportunity to study in an agricultural-related discipline as a USDA scholar. The program will provide at least 34 scholarships each year, to total at least 136 scholarships over a four-year period. In addition, the program will provide meaningful employment opportunities for scholarship recipients.

USDA will provide students in the program with full tuition, fees, books, use of a personal computer and software, and employment and employee benefits for each of four years while pursuing a bachelor's degree. Each scholarship is valued between \$15,000 and \$22,000 per student per year. The institutions will provide the scholarship recipients with room and board for each year.

To be considered, a student must score 1,000 or higher on the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) or 21 or higher on the American College Test (ACT), have a 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) or higher, and demonstrate successful leadership and community service.

Students must be U.S. citizens, demonstrate good citizenship and sign a service agreement to work one year for USDA for each year of scholarship. During the scholarship period, students are part-time employees of USDA.

Final selections are made by USDA based on merit rankings of applicants by the institutions.

Applications are now available from USDA Liaison Officers at the respective institutions. Students must complete and submit an application by Jan. 31, 1994, to become eligible for consideration for designation as a USDA/1890 National Scholar.

Della Streaty
Alabama A&M University
Normal, Ala. 35762

Elvis Graves
North Carolina A&T University
Greensboro, N.C. 27411

Clifton Peters
Alcorn State University
Lorman, Miss. 39096

Horace Hodge
Prairie View A&M University
Prairie View, Texas 77446

Median (Bill) Vidrine
Delaware State University
Dover, Del. 19901

James Williams
South Carolina State University
Orangeburg, S.C. 29116

Rozier Crew
Florida A&M University
Tallahassee, Fla. 32307

Serial Kenerson
Southern University
Baton Rouge, La. 70892

Sheila Gillette
Fort Valley State College
Fort Valley, Ga. 31030

Will A. Nesby
Tennessee State University
Nashville, Tenn. 73209

John H. Jones
Kentucky State University
Frankfort, Ky. 40601

Clifford E. Jones
Tuskegee University
Tuskegee, Ala. 36088

Marvin Cooks
Langston University
Langston, Okla. 73050

Robert Cole
University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff
Pine Bluff, Ark. 71601

Donald Case
Lincoln University
Jefferson City, Mo. 65101

Loney B. Stewart, Jr.
University of Maryland-Eastern Shore
Princess Anne, Md. 21853

Eugene Carnette, Jr.
Virginia State University
Petersburg, Va. 23803

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Release No. 1051.93
Dana Stewart (202) 720-5091
Ron Hall (202) 720-3310

USDA INVITES COMMENTS ON GRAIN STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Grain Inspection Service is seeking comments and suggested changes to the U.S. standards for flaxseed, mixed grain, oats, rye, sunflower seed, and triticale.

According to FGIS Acting Administrator David Galliard, FGIS is assessing the need for revisions to various sections of the standards, and the potential for improvements and language clarification.

The request for comments was published as an advance notice of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register on Dec. 17.

Comments must be submitted in writing by February 15, 1994, to George Wollam, USDA, FGIS, Room 0624 South Building, P.O. Box 96454, Washington, DC, 20090-6454; FAX (202) 720-4628.

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Release No. 1054.93

Doug Hendrix (301) 436-7253

Ron Hall (202) 720-3310

USDA PROPOSES AMENDING RULES FOR JAPANESE UNSHU ORANGE IMPORTATIONS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has proposed to allow the importation of Unshu oranges to certain non-citrus producing states. With this proposed change, Japanese Unshu oranges can be shipped to or through an expanded area including Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina and South Carolina.

"Currently, regulations prohibit these oranges from moving into or through commercial citrus-producing areas and 'buffer' or bordering states," said B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator for plant protection and quarantine in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The prohibition on the tangerine-like Unshu orange is based on its ability to carry and introduce citrus canker. U.S. and Japanese plant protection agencies work closely to ensure that trees and oranges are free from canker, and that the surfaces of oranges are sterilized before export.

"We believe these existing safeguards are adequate to ensure that the Unshu oranges would not spread citrus canker if permitted into the proposed additional states," Lee said.

The APHIS proposal was published in the Dec. 20 Federal Register. Comments will be accepted if they are received on or before January 19. An original and three copies of written comments referring to docket number 93-077-1 should be sent to: Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments received may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing to review comments are encouraged to call ahead on (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry into the comment reading room.

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Program Announcements-

Release No. 1045.93

Gene Rosera (202) 720-6734

Charles Hobbs (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES, MARKETING CERTIFICATE RATES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21--Under Secretary of Agriculture Eugene Moos today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

--long grain whole kernels:	11.67 cents per pound
--medium grain whole kernels:	10.96 cents per pound
--short grain whole kernels:	10.87 cents per pound
--broken kernels:	5.84 cents per pound

Based upon these milled rice world market prices, loan deficiency payment (LDP) rates, gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price, and marketing certificate rates are:

	Loan Gain and LDP Rate	Marketing Certificate Rate
\$/Cwt.....	
--for long grain:	\$0.00	\$0.00
--for medium grain:	\$0.00	\$0.00
--for short grain:	\$0.00	\$0.00

These announced prices and rates are effective today at 3 p.m. EST. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Dec. 28 at 3 p.m. EST.

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Release No. 1052.93
Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

USDA SEEKS COMMENTS ON 1994 MARKETING QUOTAS FOR 6 KINDS OF TOBACCO

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture today asked for public comment on the 1994 marketing quotas for six kinds of tobacco.

The tobaccos and principal growing states are: Virginia fire-cured, type 21 and Virginia sun-cured, type 37 (Virginia); cigar filler and binder, types 42-44 and 53-55 (Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin); fire-cured, types 22-23 Kentucky and Tennessee); dark air-cured, types 35-36, (Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee); and cigar filler, type 46 (Puerto Rico).

USDA will consider any comments received by Feb. 4. The quotas will be announced by March 1. Details appeared in the Dec. 21st Federal Register. Send comments to: Deputy Administrator, Policy Analysis, USDA-ASCS, Room 3090, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013-2415. Contact: Robert Miller (202) 720-8839.



Release No. 1053.93
Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

USDA RELEASES SWEETENER MARKET DATA REPORT FOR OCTOBER 1993

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today released its Sweetener Market Data report for October 1993.

Report totals, in short tons (2,000 pounds), include:

- Oct. 1, 1993 beginning sugar stocks - 1,596,797.
- U.S. beet sugar production for October 1993 - 646,131.
- U.S. cane sugar production for October 1993 - 432,756.
- Deliveries for October 1993 - 771,145, including deliveries for domestic human consumption - 762,271.
- Oct. 31, 1993 ending sugar stocks - 1,888,494.

Copies of the Sweetener Market Data report for October 1993 data are available from the Sweeteners Analysis Division, ASCS/USDA, Room 3727-S, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013; telephone (202) 720-3391; FAX (202) 720-8261.



Release No. 1056.93
Robert Feist (202) 720-6789

USDA EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD ON PROPOSED RULES FOR STATE MILK MARKETING ORDERS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23--The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced that it is extending for 60 days, until April 1, 1994, the final date for submitting comments on a supplemental proposed rule and additional comments on the original proposed rule, regarding excessive manufacturing allowances in state marketing orders for milk.

The supplemental proposed rule, which would establish procedures for implementing section 102 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990, was published Nov. 1 in the Federal Register. Under the supplemental proposed rule those States which operate milk pricing programs would be considered out of compliance with Section 102 unless the States required plants to pay a price for milk used in the production of cheese or butter and nonfat dry milk that is no less than the respective Class III or Class III-A price effective in the Federal Milk Order operating in the competitive area. However, handlers in non-complying States could avoid penalties by paying the higher prices.

The original proposed rule, published in the June 19, 1992 Federal Register, required that States using product formulas to price milk used to produce butter, nonfat dry milk or cheese, could not use manufacturing allowances in setting prices that are greater than the allowances used in the Federal price support program. The current Federal milk price support program allowances are \$1.22 for milk used to produce butter and nonfat dry milk and \$1.37 for milk used to produce cheese.

The notice of extension will be published in the Federal Register in the near future.

Comments should be sent to Dr. Charles N. Shaw, Director, Dairy Analysis Division, USDA/ASCS, Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013. Comments will be available for public inspection in Room 3754-S of USDA's South Building during normal business hours.



FEATURE-

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USDA HOTLINE OFFERS NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS TO KEEP YOU "FOOD SAFE" IN 1994

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23 -- So you've decided to make some New Year's resolutions to be more healthy, now that 1994 is about to make its grand entrance.

Congratulations. Join the bandwagon. Welcome to the club.

After all, this is the time of the year that you -- and millions of others -- resolve to lose weight, cut out sweets, exercise more, and otherwise be a better and healthier person for the next 12 months.

But here's something else that you should resolve to do in 1994 in order to stay healthy, but may forget about until it's too late -- and that's preparing food safely to avoid food poisoning.

"Based on estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in an average year there are some 8 million cases of people getting sick because of foodborne illness -- better known as food poisoning," said Susan Conley, Manager of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's nationwide toll-free Meat and Poultry Hotline.

Food poisoning? Yes, and many of the illnesses resulted because people ate food that was mishandled at home -- or away.

In addition, experts advise that there may be countless more cases which go unreported because someone -- maybe you -- merely passed off 'not feeling well' as just another case of the flu.

"Many of those unreported cases are not the flu -- but actually a case of food poisoning," Conley said.

So what types of resolutions can you make to avoid food poisoning? Well, try these:

Say the following, "I (insert your name here) resolve to"...

* Buy refrigerated and frozen foods last at the supermarket and go home immediately. I will not stop to do more errands on the way home. I will go directly home and will not pass "GO!"

* I will promptly refrigerate my foods at 40° F or colder and freeze my foods at 0° F or colder. I will buy a refrigerator thermometer so I can tell for sure whether my refrigerator and freezer are set properly.

* I will use ground meat and chicken or turkey (whole or pieces) kept in the refrigerator within 1-2 days; steaks, roasts and chops in 3-5 days; opened lunch meat packages in 3-5 days; and opened hot dog packages in a week.

* I will always wash hands, cutting boards and utensils thoroughly in hot soapy water before preparing food and after handling any raw product. I will not let uncooked food contaminate cooked food.

* I will never leave perishable food out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours.

* I will use a meat thermometer to make sure the food is cooked all the way through. I will cook ground meat to an internal temperature of 160° F, ground poultry to 165° F, and whole poultry to 180° F.

* I will visually check that ground meat is brown or gray inside, that poultry juices run clear, and that fish flakes with a fork.

* I will divide leftovers into small, shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator.

* I will reheat all leftover foods thoroughly to 165° F and I will bring sauces, soups and gravy to a boil.

* I will NEVER taste food that looks or smells strange. If I am in doubt, I will throw the suspect food out. Period.

* I will call USDA's toll-free Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555 if I have any questions about proper food handling. If I live in the Washington, D.C., area, I will call 202-720-3333. (The hours are 10 am to 4 pm, weekdays, Eastern Time).

And finally, I will follow all of the above rules so that 1994 will be a safe, healthy and happy new year.



